

## RAWAH WILDERNESS GEOGRAPHIC AREA

### Setting

The Rawah Wilderness is located west of the Laramie River Valley, along the Medicine Bow Divide. Vegetation includes a mixed conifer forest dominated by lodgepole pine and aspen on the south- and east-facing slopes and Engelmann spruce and subalpine fir on the north and west slopes. Krummholz spruce and fir are found at timberline. The northern part of the area is characterized by open parks surrounded by ponderosa and lodgepole pine which gradually lead to a landscape dominated by sagebrush as it approaches the Wyoming border. The southern part of the area is dominated by thick stands of lodgepole pine with openings mostly restricted to stream courses. Elevations range from 8,400 to 13,000 feet. Open parks with riparian zones with large willow components serve as important big-game habitat. Moose populations are increasing. Greenback cutthroat trout populations may be present in some streams.

The area is administratively withdrawn from timber harvest. The area is infrequently burned by wildfire but has experienced large stand-replacement fires in the past (McIntyre burn). The Rawah Wilderness is a Class I area with respect to air quality and is located in the Medicine Bow Airshed. Livestock grazing has occurred on an allotment that is currently vacant. The area receives considerable recreational use year-round with the majority occurring during summer and winter. The southern portion of the area adjacent to Colorado State Highway 14 receives the majority of winter use, with very little use occurring in the remainder of the area. There are numerous trails and trailheads within the area.

The current transportation system's primary access routes are Colorado State Highway 14 and Laramie River Road (Larimer County Road 103).

### Goals and Desired Conditions

Timber harvest is not allowed. Accept insect and disease losses. Allow natural processes to be the primary actions that affect vegetation mix and structure. Reintroduce fire into the ecosystem by preparing a fire management plan identifying conditions under which wildland fires may be managed by prescription control and to design specific prescribed fires. Prescribed fire (including mixed/variable and stand-replacement fires) may be implemented to maintain a natural landscape and conditions that occurred naturally before human intervention.

Maintain healthy willow communities in areas used by moose.

Manage activities to protect greenback cutthroat trout habitat and populations and to enhance recovery.

Close the Shipman Park grazing allotment, now vacant, because of incompatibility of livestock

grazing with recreation, fishery habitat and big game concerns. Remove range-improvement structures.

Maintain a primitive to semiprimitive environment by managing recreation. Consider a permit system as one method to maintain this environment if recreational use and impacts continue to increase. Eliminate motorized trespass.

Continue the camping closure at Blue Lake and the seasonal prohibition of saddle and pack animals in the Blue Lake zone.

Continue prohibiting campfires in the alpine ecosystem.

Manage the trails system to protect soil and water resources and to provide the least developed access into the wilderness by not constructing new trails and by rehabilitating human-caused disturbances.

Protect and where possible improve visibility, aquatic and terrestrial flora and fauna, soils and water chemistry. Continue air quality monitoring at Island Lake and Rawah Lake #4.

Develop a partnership with Colorado State Forest to provide and share data on existing conditions and trends in air quality in the Rawah Wilderness and State Forest.

Manage search-and-rescue efforts in accordance with Forest, national and regional policy.

### **Standards and Guidelines**

1. (GL) Reconstruct and rehabilitate trails to minimize maintenance requirements, environmental impacts, and provide for user safety.

### **Travel Management Strategy, Rawah Wilderness Geographic Area**

Management Area	Mode	Existing System	Convert Ways	New Rds/Trls	Extent of Additions	Extent of Obliterations
1.1	4WD	N	N	N	N	N
	MTR	N	N	N	N	N
	WMT	N	N	N	N	N
	WNM	Y	N	N	N	N
	NMT	Y	N	N	N	N

